

## The torch of Koan: passing on the flame to the future

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The 88th Annual Meeting of the Japanese Orthopaedic Association (JOA) will be held on May 21–24, 2015, at Kobe International Convention Center, Kobe International Exhibition Hall, and Kobe Portopia Hotel. The main theme of this congress is “Be Innovative! Toward the World and Toward the Future.” It is a great honor and privilege for Osaka University to host this great congress. We are currently preparing the scientific program very eagerly, aiming to cover the latest advances not only in all aspects of orthopedic surgery but also in other related fields in the health sciences. In addition, we are planning to hold many exciting cultural, sporting, and entertainment events to welcome all of the participants to the congress.

Recently, many remarkable advances in the development of new medications and regenerative medicine have been reported, including iPS cells, which were developed by a JOA member and Nobel Prize laureate, Prof. Shinya Yamanaka. However, so-called “drug lag” and “device lag” are still present in Japan, so patients are not always treated in the most advanced way. On the other hand, Japan’s advanced medical technologies and devices are not prevailing worldwide, and Japan appears to have a much smaller presence in the field of applied clinical medicine than might be expected. In 2020, five years after the congress, we will have the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo, and global health needs will have grown. Along with novel scientific insights, global perspectives are necessary, even in our field—orthopedic surgery, and every one of us must contribute to global health.

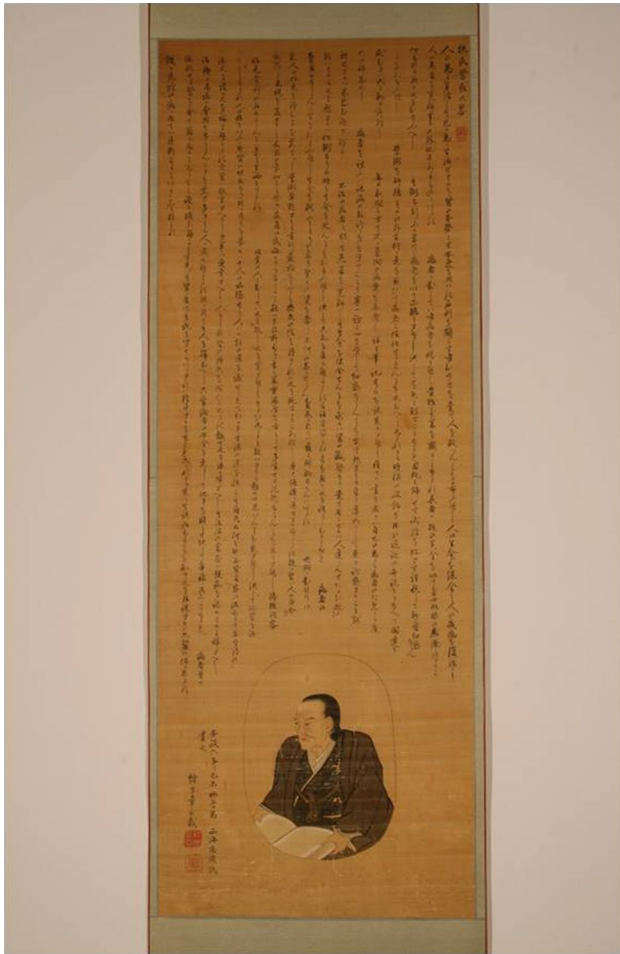
In this congress, many colleagues who are devoted to advancing medicine globally will be invited as plenary speakers or symposiasts, and we expect active and exciting discussion in each session. We are also planning to run many instructional course lectures, luncheon seminars, morning and evening seminars, and panel discussions. Many colleagues, including young surgeons and scientists who are devoted to their studies, will be invited to present their updated outcomes. Moreover, common and contemporary orthopedic problems, including locomotive syndrome, will be discussed intensively in many free papers and poster sessions. We hope that all of the participants in the congress will not only clarify the state of the art but also enjoy updates on all types of orthopedic issues.

Following last year’s congress, a combined symposium with the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons will be held, and hip preservation will be discussed as one of the hot topics in the two countries. This symposium is entitled “Hip Preservation: Challenges for Preserving Patient’s Joint by Osteotomy and Arthroscopy.” Furthermore, we are planning an international symposium entitled “Total Knee Arthroplasty in Asia,” to discuss Asia-specific problems regarding knee arthroplasty with many leading knee surgeons from Asian countries. We expect that many Japanese colleagues as well as participants from many other countries will enjoy the resulting discussion of current orthopedic issues at a truly international level.

Osaka University evolved from Tekijuku, a private school founded in Osaka in 1838 by Koan Ogata (Fig. 1). He was a prominent medical doctor, scholar, and educator in that era, and educated many young people who later contributed to the modernization of Japan. As he emphasized in his revision of *Hufeland’s Code for the Physician* (*Fushi Ikai No Ryaku*), altruism and nobility were more highly valued than anything else in Tekijuku. The first of its twelve

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**Fig. 1** A portrait of Koan Ogata and *Fushi Ikai Tairyaku* 1859 (Ansei 6), by Koan Ogata (also known as Akira Ogata and Kosai Ogata). From the Osaka University Tekijuku Commemoration Association (a collection donated by Mr. Saikichi Ogata)

clauses proceeds as follows [1]: “The physician lives not for himself but for others. This is the essence of his profession. Do not look for fame or profit. Work to save others though you lose yourself. Maintain life, restore the sick and ease the suffering of men. You have no other object.”

He also used translations of Dutch books to introduce novel Western medical science to Japan, which was considered quite rare in those days, and required his disciples to gain global perspectives in the free-and-open-spirited learning environment of Tekijuku. Today, in the era of globalization, the spirit of Koan has become more and more important, and every one of us must step forward into the world and towards the future. Here, I would also like to introduce a work written by a great Japanese author, Ryotaro Shiba (1923–1996), which was intended for young people and entitled *Koan no Taimatsu* (*The Torch of Koan*) [2]:

“Nothing is more beautiful than a life devoted to the world. Here, I want to write about a person who lived a particularly beautiful life. He is Koan Ogata... He did not seek fame, nor did he seek personal gain. He had overflowing talent and continued to live for others. That kind of life seems truly beautiful, like distant mountains and rivers. And yet, Koan was not an eccentric person. He was an extremely ordinary person of gentle character as you might find in any village or any town. He was kind to the sick, and his heart was always filled with love... Koan was a man who took the torch he had received from his mentors and made its flame all the brighter. His greatness was his continuous passing on of his fire to each and every one of his students. The fire of his students’ torches later shined brightly in their respective realms. In the end, their fires became the great light that illuminated Japan’s modern era. We, the generations that followed, must be thankful to Koan.”

Other than Tekijuku in Osaka, we have many historical places in the Kansai region—the fountainhead of Japanese culture. Many old temples and shrines in Kyoto and Nara have been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, and attract numerous tourists from all over the world. Another UNESCO World Heritage Site, Himeji Castle, is widely considered Japan’s most spectacular castle; it was never destroyed in wars, earthquakes, or fires, and thus survives in its original form, unlike many other Japanese castles. It is now undergoing substantial once-every-half-century renovation work and will reopen in March 2015, just before the congress. Visitors are sure to be impressed by the breathtaking beauty of this magnificent tower with its silver-white plaster walls and shining black roof tiles.

Lastly, again, we truly welcome our many colleagues and hope that every participant in the congress will enjoy not only the congress itself but also the many attractive places to visit in the Kansai region. Surrounded by sea and mountains, Kobe is one of the most beautiful and comfortable cities in Japan. You can enjoy all its charms, exotic streets, delicious cuisine, and amusing nightlife, leading to unforgettable memories. Please join us at JOA 2015 in Kobe: “Be Innovative!” and step forward together “Toward the World and Toward the Future!”

## References

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